DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 247 491 CG 017 651

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TITLE Career Status of Graduates: Implications for Human Development.
PUB DATE 21 Mar 84
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Association for Counseling and Development (Houston, TX, March 18-21, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Planning; Careers; *College Graduates; *Employment Level; Ethnicity; Higher Education; Individual Development; Individual Needs; Job Search Methods; Sex Differences
IDENTIFIERS University of Houston TX

ABSTRACT

Graduates' perceptions of their education and their success in the marketplace can provide measures of institutional effectiveness. To assess graduates' attitudes towards their education and to determine their career status and vocational success, 1,213 University of Houston graduates were sent a survey questionnaire. An analysis of the results (65% response rate) showed that overall, 90% of the graduates were satisfied with the University but that minorities were less satisfied with their major fields of study than were non-minorities. The five most common job search strategies were networking, phone/walk-in, want-ad, campus recruitment, and employment agencies. Campus recruitment was most effective for women, while networking was most effective for men. Non-minority graduates used networking much more effectively than minority graduates, and obtained higher salaries from their business contacts. Slightly more males than females were employed, though more males were continuing their education. The median salary for all respondents was $20,252, with females receiving a median salary of $17,200, and minority graduates receiving a median salary of $19,300. More than twice as many minority graduates (15%) and four times as many noncitizen graduates (24%) were unemployed as were non-minorities (6.5%), except for Native Americans (0%) and Mexican Americans (5.7%). These findings suggest that tailoring programs to meet individual needs may permit a more effective transition to the workplace. (BL)

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CAREER STATUS OF GRADUATES: IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

American Association for Counseling and Development
March 21, 1984
Houston, Texas

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CG 017651

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CAREER STATUS OF GRADUATES:
IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Recognizing that graduates' perceptions of their education and their success in the marketplace can provide measures of institutional effectiveness, the Career Planning and Placement Center conducted the first comprehensive follow-up study of May 1982 baccalaureate degree recipients. The purpose was to assess graduates' attitudes towards their education and to determine their career status and vocational success. It is expected that findings from the study will benefit academic and administrative planning and decision making; provide data for academic and career advising; and serve to demonstrate institutional accountability to governing boards, accreditation agencies and legislative bodies.

The design of the study was based on the Southern Regional Education Board's work and the University of Illinois' ten-year experience with follow-up studies. Selected as a method for implementation was Dillman's (1978) total design approach for conducting mail and phone surveys. The survey questionnaire and personalized cover letter were mailed to 1213 graduates in January 1983, followed by a second mailing and telephone survey to non-respondents, resulting in a 65 percent response rate (all colleges 53% or higher).

The results of the study emphasized the university's diverse multicultural population and led to further analysis of the data by gender and minority and non-minority groups. The findings suggest tailoring programs to meet individual needs permitting a more effective transition to the world of work.

This presentation highlights the prime differences by gender and ethnicity and depicts them in tabular format at the end of this paper.

EDUCATION

Overall, a high percentage of graduates (90%) were satisfied with the University. Few differences existed between how male and female graduates felt about their education.

Minorities were equally satisfied with the university but more highly dissatisfied with their major than non-minorities. Only 50 percent would select the same major; 23 percent would take a different major compared to 64 percent and 15 percent of respective non-minorities. Minorities tended to expect their coursework to be more practically oriented; 53 percent indicated their courses were too theoretical compared with 40 percent of non-minorities. Minorities were also more critical and dissatisfied concerning the quality of instruction (27% versus 20%), challenge of the work (20% versus 14%), instructional materials (35% versus 24%), and faculty availability for conferencing outside of class (25% versus 18%).

The highest dissatisfaction rates from all graduates were registered regarding academic (34%) and vocational guidance (45%) received from faculty. Again minorities paralleled the same above pattern; they were more highly dissatisfied with academic advising (42% versus 34%) and vocational (54% versus 45%) advising they received.

Blacks and Mexican Americans were the most pleased with their alma mater, however, only 42% of the Blacks would choose the same major again compared with 64% of whites. Asians and Spanish Americans were the most displeased with the University and their major, although a high proportion of both ethnic groups were continuing their education at their undergraduate institution.

CAREER STATUS

Employers (434) representing 18 types of organizations hired UH graduates; 5 percent out of state and 95 percent in Texas (88 percent within Harris County,

Greater Houston area). The five most common job search strategies among more than 13 cited were: networking (42%), (contact of friend, relative, business associate); phone/walk-in, want-ad, campus recruitment (10% each); and employment agencies (6%).

The methods used for securing employment, the time of employment and the salary received varied considerably between males and females and minorities and non-minorities.

Males and Females

Campus recruitment was the most effective job search strategy for females in terms of salary obtained and level of job satisfaction (91%, highest of all methods). Only 50 percent of the females who used agencies were satisfied with their jobs compared with 82 percent of the males who used this strategy. Note also on the attached tables that the highest median salary ($27,000) was obtained by males using this approach.

Networking (42%) was not only the most common job search strategy but also yielded high salaries especially for men. Personal contact of relatives, however, brought a high level of job dissatisfaction (almost 40%) for both sexes.

Interestingly, of all May 1982 respondents who obtained their jobs by graduation, 91 percent were satisfied compared with 72 percent who found them after graduation. Of those males and females who obtained their positions by graduation, recruitment and networking were the most common methods used. A higher percentage of males (40%) than females (26%) worked in their career positions while enrolled. Almost 20 percent more females obtained their positions after graduation than males, although each used networking, phone/walk-in and want-ads approximately equally.

Female graduates from the Colleges of Business, Engineering and Technology obtained their positions by graduation at a higher rate than males; the reverse

was true for those employed in them while enrolled. A higher percentage of females than males from the Colleges of Business and Technology obtained their positions after graduation.

Minorities and Non-Minorities

Non-minorities (42%) used networking much more effectively than minorities (25%) and obtained higher salaries ($23,500) from their business contacts. A very low proportion of those minorities (40%) who relied on relatives were satisfied with their jobs. Minorities obtained the highest salaries from faculty referral, campus recruitment and friends; non-minorities from Placement Center referral and job postings; agencies and business associates. While twice as high a proportion of non-minorities used recruitment as minorities, both groups were highly satisfied with their jobs (89% and 100% respectively).

Although a higher percentage of non-minorities (31%) obtained their positions by graduation than minorities (22%) both used similar job search strategies with the exception of minorities who relied more heavily on phone/walk-in approaches and want-ads than networking.

VOCATIONAL SUCCESS

Slightly more males (85%) than females (82%) were employed though more males (10% versus 7%) were unemployed and continuing their education (27% versus 20%). Females tended to have a higher proportion in the not working, not seeking category (11% versus 5%).

The median salary for all graduate respondents was $20,252 and these graduates in almost every field of study were remunerated at a higher rate than graduates nationally or regionally. Women, however, received a lower median salary ($17,200), $6,800 less than their male counterparts ($24,000). Only in Architecture, Education, Pharmacy, Biology, Civil Engineering, Journalism, Mathematics, Music and Psychology were women compensated equally. Furthermore,

women graduates perceived themselves as less suitably employed on salary (51%, men 58%), and responsibilities (59%, men 63%).

More than twice as many minority graduates (15%) and four times as many non-citizens (24%) were unemployed as non-minorities (6.5%) with two outstanding ethnic group exceptions; unemployment for Native Americans (0.0%) and Mexican Americans (5.7%). Asians had the highest unemployment rate (23.5%) and half of them were continuing their education. Minorities (53%) and non-citizens (50%) tended to continue their education primarily at the post-baccalaureate level while a higher percentage of non-minorities were enrolled for masters' degrees.

Minorities and non-minorities held similar perceptions on whether they were suitably employed by salary and job responsibilities. However, in the case of Blacks, only 32 percent felt they received adequate salary and only 39% felt their job responsibilities were appropriate to their educational background. Minorities earned a median salary of $19,300 and non-minorities $21,000. Mexican Americans, though, earned the highest median salary ($22,850) of all groups.

Implications and Conclusions

In a multi-cultural environment increased understanding of special groups is imperative to ease the transition from academe to a technological world of work. Human development professionals can utilize modern technology to understand diverse student populations; use research results to assist in curricular and career planning, and counseling and advising to meet the educational and vocational needs of current and future students. Findings can serve also as the basis for administrative and academic planning and decision making.

A university-wide commitment to advising, supported with an adequate budget and sufficient numbers of trained professionals to address the academic and

career needs of all students and especially minorities is highly recommended. At the college level, recognition of the unique educational needs of minorities is important in improving advising and instructional programs and the ease with which students may conference with faculty.

Early career planning and a carefully targeted job campaign are necessary ingredients for employment and a high level of job satisfaction. Utilizing selective job search approaches based on findings will contribute to vocational success. For example, Asians and Mexican Americans have yet to establish a network of contacts (the least likely of all groups to use networking, 9% and 14% respectively) and thus have relied more on phone/walk-in and want-ads to hear about their jobs.

The study results also underline the importance of obtaining an exemplary record, and acquiring polished job search and communication skills.

The overall positive feeling reported about the University and major along with the knowledge gained about graduates' careers status and vocational success can be utilized as a public relations vehicle for college recruiting, for employers seeking qualified candidates, as well as for alumni and fund development.

Replicating the follow-up study every two or three years as well as conducting a longitudinal study of the original sample group will provide a more representative picture of graduates' career mobility and advancement, salary, and patterns of vocational success.

ENROLLMENT, BACCALAUREATES AND SURVEY RESPONSE

GROUP	UNIVERSITY PARK 1982 ENROLLMENT	BACCALAUREATES MAY 1982		SURVEY RESPONSE RATE	
	%	N	%	N	%
WHITES	72.3	885	72.0	579	77.0
BLACKS	10.5	98	7.9	50	7.0
HISPANICS:	6.5	90	7.3	54	7.5
MEXICAN AM.	-	54	(4.4)	35	(5.0)
SPANISH AM.	-	36	(2.9)	19	(2.5)
ASIANS	5.2	40	3.2	34	4.5
NATIVE AM.	.5	3	.2	11	1.0
INTERNATIONALS	5.0	113	9.2*	55	7.0
OTHER				20	3.0
MALES	55	639	52.0	387	51.0
FEMALES	45	590	48.0	362	48.0

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES
SALARY AND JOB SATISFACTION

		MALES			FEMALES		
STRATEGY	PERCENT	RANK	SALARY	JOB SAT.	RANK	SALARY	JOB SAT.
NETWORKING	42	•	• • •	•	•	• • •	•
BUSINESS ASSOCIATE	•	2	$24,500	86	4	$17,150	87
FRIEND	•	3	23,750	80	6	15,606	78
RELATIVE	•	5	21,750	65	2	18,060	62
CAMPUS RECRUITMENT	10	4	22,800	89	1	21,150	91
WANT AD	10	6	21,500	68	5	17,000	57
PHONE/ WALK-IN	10	7	18,000	66	7	15,400	78
AGENCY	6	1	27,000	82	3	18,000	50
OTHER	22	•	• • •	•	•	• • •	•

TIME OF EMPLOYMENT AND JOB SEARCH STRATEGY

	MALES			FEMALES		
TIME	PERCENT	STRATEGY	PERCENT	PERCENT	STRATEGY	PERCENT
BY GRADUATION	32	RECRUITMENT	25	28	RECRUITMENT	37
		NETWORK	27		NETWORK	19
WHILE ENROLLED	40	NETWORK	53	26	NETWORK	50
AFTER GRADUATION	28	NETWORK	34	46	NETWORK	35
		PHONE/WALK-IN	14		PHONE/WALK-IN	16
		AD	16		AD	15

TIME OF EMPLOYMENT
BY COLLEGE

MALES			FEMALES		
COLLEGE			COLLEGE		
BUS.	ENGR.	TECH.	BUS.	ENGR.	TECH.
31%	47%	22%	48%	56%	24%
50	30	48	19	31	27
17	22	29	33	13	43

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES
SALARY AND JOB SATISFACTION

	MINORITY			NON-MINORITY		
STRATEGY	PERCENT	SALARY	JOB SAT. PERCENT	PERCENT	SALARY	JOB SAT. PERCENT
NETWORKING	25			42		
FRIENDS	(10)	$21.600	80	(23)	$19,000	80
RELATIVES	(9)	19,000	40	(10)	22,000	68
BUSINESS ASSOCIATES	(6)	17,500	88	(8)	23,500	86
WANT-AD	17	17,500	69	9	19,800	63
PHONE/WALK-IN	16	17,000	71	9	15,800	72
JOB POSTING	8	17,800		2	23,000	
CAMPUS RECUITMENT	6	21,650	100	12	21,750	89
AGENCY	4	16,950		6	24,000	
FACULTY REFERRAL	2	27,000		6	20,000	
CPPC REFERRAL	2	19,005		1	24,600	

TIME OF EMPLOYMENT AND JOB SEARCH STRATEGY

	MINORITY			NON-MINORITY		
TIME	PERCENT	STRATEGY	PERCENT	PERCENT	STRATEGY	PERCENT
BY GRADUATION	22	RECRUITMENT	29	31	RECRUITMENT	30
		NETWORK	13		NETWORK	26
WHILE ENROLLED	32	NETWORK	39	32	NETWORK	55
AFTER GRADUATION	43	NETWORK	27	37	NETWORK	42
		PHONE/WALK-IN	26		PHONE/WALK-IN	12
		AD	20		AD	14

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

	MINOR	NON-MINOR	NON-CITIZENS
EMPLOYED	64%	75.0%	58%
UNEMPLOYED	15	6.5	24
NOT SEEKING	9	7.5	5
CONTINUING EDUCATION	31	21.0	16

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATIONAL STATUS

ETHNIC GROUP	MEDIAN SALARY	FULL TIME %	UNEMPLOY-MENT %	NOT WORKING NOT SEEKING %	CONTINUING EDUCATION %
NATIVE AMERICANS	$17,500	81.8	0.0	9.0	18
MEXICAN AMERICANS	22,850	74.2	5.7	11.4	17
WHITES	21,000	73.9	6.5	7.5	22
SPANISH AMERICANS	21,600	68.4	15.7	10.5	37
ASIANS	21,300	58.8	23.5	11.7	50
BLACKS	15,900	56.0	18.0	6.0	28

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